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KOREA AS A SOVIET SPRINGBOARD

by Kiyoshi K. Kawakami

In the last war Korea was a liberated, not a conquered, nation. Yet the situation there closely parallels that of divided Germany today.

Soviet Russia, working with the puppet regime set up in its half of Germany, is operating by fair means and foul to squeeze its former allies first out of Berlin, eventually out of all Western Germany. Happily, the Western zones, with the aid of the European Reconstruction Program, are being welded into one unit to check this encroachment.

Soviet Russia, ensconced in the territory north of the thirty-eighth parallel, has also set up a puppet Korean government for that zone, buttressing it with a native army and a native "security" police organized, respectively, by the Red Army and the MVD, the Soviet secret police. The United States occupies the territory south of that dividing line. American troops arrived in South Korea on September 8, 1945, a few weeks after the Russians occupied North Korea.

The Soviet zone of Korea is rich in natural resources and was extensively industrialized under the former Japanese regime. The American zone is poor except in agriculture. Economically, then, Russia already has secured a stranglehold upon the whole of Korea.

Thus advantageously situated, Moscow proposes that both the occupying Powers withdraw troops and let the Koreans choose a government of their own which would unify the North and South. This proposal, if adopted, would result in the establishment at Seoul of a Red government taking orders from Moscow.

II

A glance at the map reveals the strategic position of Korea in northeastern Asia, and explains why this country has long been a bone of contention among Powers contesting for control of the Far East.

In the closing decades of the Nineteenth Century the contest was between Japan and China, then the "sleeping giant of Asia". When the giant was knocked out by Japan in 1895, Russia, a greater colossus, loomed upon the horizon. Its defeat in 1905 left Japan mistress of the Korean peninsula.

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Now, thanks to Anglo-American miscalculations at Tehran, Yalta and Potsdam, Russia is back on the Korean scene with all the military paraphernalia of Czarist imperialism reinforced by modern techniques of Communist infiltration. And the sad fact is that the United Nations is powerless to save the situation for "liberated" Korea.

This was tacitly admitted by the UN Commission which flew to Seoul last February to supervise selection of Korean delegates who could participate in UN deliberations on the whole Korean question. Boycotted by North Korea, the Commission flew back to Lake Success empty-handed, and reported to the "Little Assembly" that "Korea may blow up and it may be the beginning of a vaster cataclysm in Asia and in the world".

The Commission's report was, in fact, an expression of despair and defeat as is evident in the alternative recommendations laid before the "Little Assembly":

> "(1) That elections be held in the American zone and that the provisional government thus organized in South Korea be recognized as the National Government regardless of what Russia may do in its zone, north of the thirty-eighth parallel. (2) That consultative elections be held to choose Korean representatives whom the UN might consult in further deliberations. (3) That another effort be made to bring together the opposing political leaders of the North and South. (4) That the Commission wash its hands of the whole affair."

The "Little Assembly", in the absence of any better plan, adopted the first alternative, which had the blessings of the United States, although Canada and Australia voted against it. So South Korea will have popular elections on May 10, for the selection of a "national" assembly which in turn will organize a "national" government.

The government thus organized is to call upon both the U. S. and the U. S. S. R. to withdraw their respective armies. The United States Government, frustrated in all its efforts to unify Korea, would probably gladly abandon this commitment. Russia too would willingly withdraw, but for an entirely different reason. The native Red Army which it has organized and trained is capable of holding Korea for Moscow.

Thus the plan adopted by the "Little Assembly" is in effect likely not merely to split Korea at the thirty-eighth parallel, but also to allow the Communists eventually to take over the whole of the peninsula. South of the thirty-eighth parallel even today the native leaders -- Syngman Rhee, Kim Koo, Kimm Kiu-sic, et al. -- are far from united. Some are vacillating between the U. S. and the U. S. S. R., some are said to be secretly in contact with Communist Korea. And the Communists in the American zone itself are growing both in number and in influence.

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At the Cairo conference it was decided by Roosevelt and Churchill that "Korea shall become free and independent". This decision was confirmed at Yalta.

In December, 1945, the American, British and Soviet Foreign Ministers met at Moscow and adopted a Russian proposal for a joint American-Soviet Commission to expedite economic unification of Korea, as well as the institution of a provisional government and of a Soviet-American-British-Chinese trusteeship to last for five years.

When this proposal was made public the Koreans in the American zone raised a hue and cry against the trusteeship idea. Significantly, the Koreans in the Soviet zone held their peace. It looked as though some understanding had even then been reached between the Communist Koreans and their Russian overlord. Few at that stage -- except perhaps the master minds of Moscow -- foresaw that the trusteeship proposal was to operate so completely in the Russian interest.

When the American-Russian Commission opened discussion on the organization of a provisional government, Moscow showed its hand -- it blandly insisted that only Koreans who had not opposed the trusteeship idea be consulted! This Soviet proposal was calculated to exclude the Korean leaders in the American zone and to launch a provisional government which would be a Communist stooge of Moscow.

The Department of State rejected this proposal as a matter of course. But it has failed to find an alternative acceptable to Moscow. Meanwhile, in the Soviet zone, as chronicled by former Secretary James F. Byrnes on page 223 of Speaking Frankly:

> "The Red Army has trained an army of Koreans estimated to number from 100,000 to 400,000 men. The withdrawal of the Joint Commission and Soviet-American occupation forces would leave the Soviet-trained army the only effective military forces in Korea. Undoubtedly, this would attempt to take charge of whatever government then existed. Therefore, as a condition to withdrawal of the Commission, we must require that this army be disbanded."

But disbandment of the Soviet-trained Korean army would not by itself lead to a free Korea. We must remember that in all countries which are satellites of Moscow, the MVD is even more active than the Red Army. The former organizes native police and espionage systems while the latter creates native armies in its own image. The Korean Army may be disbanded (which is unlikely) but the Korean counterpart of the armed MVD will remain and will operate to cow all non-Communist elements and to exclude all such elements from government. Such is the universal pattern of Soviet expansion.

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The Soviet policy in Korea today is a revival of the course pursued by the Czars. The Czarist policy had in view the eventual domination of China and Japan. For this end it was essential to control Korea. As explained by Herbert Adams Gibbons in The New Map of Asia:

> "Korea has been a dagger pointed at the heart of Japan. This expression is no exaggeration. Were Korea in the hands of any European Power, the menace to Japan would be the menace to Great Britain of Belgium in the hands of Germany. A European Power ensconced in Korea could separate Japan from China and control the outlet of northern China to the Pacific. . . . Unable to defend their own interests and unwilling to take sides, the Koreans put up their country as a prize to be fought for and to be won by the strongest."

For the same reason, Japan considered it essential to lift Korea from the mire of chaos and corruption into which the country had fallen. In those years China claimed suzerainty over Korea. Therefore it was necessary for Tokyo to approach Peking with the plans of Korean reform which Japan deemed necessary. China demurred and allowed Korea's internal conditions to deteriorate hopelessly. This naturally encouraged Russia to intrigue with the Korean court. The upshot of it all was the Sino-Japanese war of 1894-95.

Japan's victory over China failed to serve as a warning against Russia's further encroachments in the Far East. Aided by France and Germany, the Czar forced Japan out of Port Arthur and Dairen, ceded by China as the result of the war, only to appropriate them himself.

The culmination of such developments was the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-05, in which Japan enjoyed the solid backing of Washington and London. At Tehran and Yalta the history of the genesis of that war was shamelessly perverted. Today, with Japan eliminated, Russia has returned to Korea intent upon advancing the ambitions which characterized the Muscovite policy in the heyday of Czarism.

Korea is contiguous to the sprawling continent that is Russia. Korea's northernmost Japan sea port, Rashin, developed by the Japanese, is adjacent to Vladivostok, Russia's eastern strategic center. There Russia will soon have a fleet of modern submarines, including the secret German type developed too late to be used in the last war, but being built for Russia by German engineers. Quite possibly, railroads are being built behind the Iron Curtain from Rashin southward. Like a glacier Russia is pushing forward.

What then will be the eventual fate of Japan; a Japan pledged to permanent disarmament under an American-ordained Constitution? This is a question uppermost in the minds of many American strategists. Is the American public equally awake to the gravity of the problem?

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Not Merely Gossip *A Supplement to* Human Events VOL. V, NO. 18

By Frank C. Hanighen May 5, 1948

A reconsideration of the chances of Taft and Stassen is under way in the Capital after the Ohio primary result. Many observers now feel that Taft more than administered a check to the Minnesotan's progress. It is pointed out that Stassen chose to run in only 23 of Ohio's 53 seats -- and those the most favorable spots -- where Labor influence could be exerted effectively. Stassen's capture of only 9 out of the 23, or one third of his chosen champs de bataille, is not exactly brilliant. Furthermore, his only candidate for delegate-at-large was defeated, although even Taft forces had been conceding this seat before the polling. This indicates the state-wide strength of the Senator, who took 44 out of the 53 seats. Also, it is estimated that the Stassen forces devoted much more money to the campaign than did the Taft headquarters. All in all, Taft has regained prestige, and it has been demonstrated that Stassen's advance is not irresistible.

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With the rapid rise of Stassen strength, some political observers have been investigating the possibility of a "blitz" at this year's GOP Convention, similar to that of Willkie in 1940. The conclusion is that organized pressure from outside the Convention and the employment of various "tricks" are unlikely this year. If ever a convention was in the hands of "regulars", this is it. Unless the "regulars" themselves should "get out of control", a stampede a la 1940 seems improbable.

For one thing, the delegates will be on their guard against organized letter and telegram drives. In 1940, the public utility organizations were very active in bombarding those on the floor with wires urging them to vote for Willkie, and not without effect. Subsequent checkups by individual delegates revealed that the drive was in many instances grossly fraudulent. Many signatures to the telegrams were exposed as being unauthorized; some even bearing the names of deceased persons. One delegate, an important member of the party, investigated the wires from his district and found that at least one third were fraudulent. This year's delegates can be counted on to remain wary of any such organized pressure.

Next, the spectators' gallery will be not so easy to infiltrate. At the recent meeting of the National Committee in Philadelphia, arrangements for gallery tickets were reportedly tightened. After counting in the delegates, alternates, Governors, Members of Congress, and the Press, there will remain an easily controllable number of tickets for others in the gallery. Standing-room tickets or badges -- which contributed to the Willkie "blitz" -- this time, it is assured, will be rigorously screened and controlled.

Finally, the present organization of the Party and of the Convention hardly offers much hope to those who would like to do for Stassen what they did for Willkie. This year Carroll Reece, Chairman of the National Committee, is a Taft supporter; the keynoter, Governor Dwight Green, is a "Chicago Tribune" man; and the permanent chairman of the Convention is Speaker Martin. All this sounds reassuring, but some skeptics have their fingers crossed. The Stassen organization, they point out, is nothing if not resourceful.

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Mr. Paul Hoffman, Administrator of ECA, seems to have put to shame pessimistic expectations (see NMG, April 14) that he would lose control of his organization. He certainly has not, initially at least, surrendered to the State Department bureaucracy, which had apparently made plans for staffing and actually directing ECA. Hoffman, in fact, has just won a battle with the White House over the naming of his Deputy Administrator. The details of this conflict are many and contro-

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versial. But Hoffman in the end obtained the appointment of his choice, Mr. Howard Bruce, Baltimore industrialist and capitalist, who is regarded on Capitol Hill as a "sound man".

Other appointments to ECA bear out the reports of Mr. Hoffman's persistance in his purpose to run his own show, in harmony with Congress. Mr. Dennis E. Fitzgerald, of the Department of Agriculture, has been given the post of Food Administrator; he is liked on Capitol Hill. Not so well received was the naming of Wayne Taylor as chief of Administration; he has long been considered as belonging to the State Department bureaucracy and bearing the New Deal stamp. But on Capitol Hill it is said that Taylor's influence is already being undermined by Richard Bissell, secretary of the Harriman Committee, and a friend of Congressman Herter, who waged a strong fight for Congressional control of ECA. Bissell has accepted a position under Hoffman. The former President of Studebaker, in short, has so far taken a strong stand, so strong that he may soon become the target of Left Wing criticism. If he can staff the lower echelons of his unit as well as he has the higher levels, he should, in fact as well as in name, "come out on top".

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In Washington and in Lake Success during the past week, one of the most persistent rumors concerned King Abdullah of Transjordania. Not only foreign representatives, but also U. S. Government officials, were inclined to give it some weight. Abdullah, according to this rumor, may make a deal -- which would in effect constitute partition -- with the Zionists. The Jewish Agency, significantly, on April 26 offered to negotiate with Abdullah. That monarch has reputedly aspired to incorporate at least part of Palestine into his territory. Foreign observers emphasize the following corollary: The British say they are withdrawing May 15 from direct control of the Holy Land; but they can continue to exert influence in this area indirectly through Abdullah. The King is subsidized heavily by the British Government, and his army is trained and staffed by British officers. He indeed would serve as a convenient British agent in Palestine.

True or not, this story illustrates the crisscross of imperialisms in the Holy Land -- British, Transjordanian and Zionist. Certainly the Zionists, if they should obtain full rule over at least some Palestine territory, would have advanced considerably towards their imperialist dream. Conveyed pickaback on British imperialism, the Zionists got into the Holy Land. Last week, they won important military victories over the Arabs. These gains recall the gradual conquest of India by Britain in the Eighteenth Century, at Plassey, Travancore, etc. One need not doubt that the developing Zionist Raj feels confident that it can later defeat Abdullah, and then go on to wider fields.

This prospect should, although it does not seem to, disturb Americans. Regardless of the contradictions of our Palestine policy, fundamentally there has been no widespread moral objection in this country to Zionist imperialism. The recent back track from partition was due to military and strategic reasons -- not to any recognition of Arab rights to their own country. If these reasons had not been present, undoubtedly the American policy would have supported the camouflaged territory-grab of the Jewish Agency. Now, this poses some important questions. Should the U. S. Government support imperialistic pretensions of any political pressure group within this country? And, regardless of the moral aspect, what will this do to our foreign policy? A French diplomat at Lake Success made the following observation the other day: "You can use foreign policy to play domestic politics, and effectively; but you can't successfully use domestic politics in conducting foreign policy."

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Official Washington has other Palestine worries than Abdullah. The brooding danger is Russian intervention. During the past week there has circulated a rumor, among the delegations at Lake Success, that there are 50,000 Russian Jews, with military training, waiting in Black Sea ports for May 15, when they will be transported to Haifa. This report has not been confirmed, but it is causing much concern in official circles here. For it is known that large Jewish groups in Balkan ports, both on the Black Sea and in Yugoslavia, have been infiltrated by Russian agents and Russian soldiers in civilian garb. Some reports emphasize the large number of these individuals. The figure of 50,000 may be too high, but even half that number would cause havoc in the Holy Land, where both the Irgun and Haganah organizations include many Communists. If the British in surrendering the mandate on May 15 withdraw their coastal patrol, there will remain no obstacle to Jewish immigration -- and Russian intervention.

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"For [Henry] James", remarks Lionel Trilling in an article in Horizon (April), "represents the poor as if they had dignity and intelligence in the same degree as people of the reading class. More, he assumes this and feels no need to insist that it is so. This is a grace of spirit that we are so little likely to understand that we may resent it. Few of our novelists are able to write about the poor so as to make them something more than the pitied objects of our facile sociological minds. The literature of our liberal democracy pets and dandles its underprivileged characters, and, quite as if it had the right to do so, forgives them what faults they may have. . . . That James should create poor people so proud and intelligent as to make it impossible for anyone, even the reader who has paid for the privilege, to condescend to them, so proud and intelligent, indeed, that it is not wholly easy for them to be 'good', is, one ventures to guess, an unexpressed, a never-to-be-expressed reason for finding him 'impotent in matters sociological'. We who are liberal and progressive know that the poor are our equals in every sense except that of being equal to us."

Professor Trilling's ironical use of "liberal" and "progressive" recalls how thinly worn are the prevalent units of political specie today, and how badly needed is a new coinage. Dissatisfaction is swelling, but no new mintage is as yet noticeably under way. This situation reminds us of what a lady told us the other day. She had been associating with D. P.'s in Europe -- many of the former Red Russians, now part of the new Slavic "underground", vowed to the remaking (some day!) of their fatherland. Our friend described how, in the Russian way, these individuals discuss interminably the new forms, or old forms renewed, which should feature "the new Russia". These folk include some nationalization, state controls and planning, as well as features of private enterprise, in their Utopias. But, the lady emphasized, there is one word which these disillusioned Communists have resolutely eliminated from their vocabulary, and that is "socialism".

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Those who liked The Road to Serfdom will look forward to the American publication of a book which has recently appeared in England -- Ordeal by Planning, by John Jewkes (Macmillan). The London Economist says: "It is an admirable polemic, worthy to stand by Professor Hayek's Road to Serfdom, and having over the latter the considerable advantage of up-to-the-minute topicality. It is the sort of book to make any reader, exasperated by the vagaries of post-war pseudo-planning, thump the table or utter inarticulate cries of applause. It has shape, style, logic, a sure grasp of principles. It is a book which eminently needed to be written, a book to be read with as much enjoyment as edification."

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Book Events

Civilization on Trial, by Arnold J. Toynbee. New York: Oxford University Press, $3.50. Reviewed by J. M. Lalley.

In these essays Professor Toynbee attempts the delicate experiment of applying his philosophy of history to some of the problems of our contemporary world. This, of course, has required a tremendous narrowing of the aloof and majestical point of vision from which the Professor prefers to work. It also involves a certain hazard of the oracular authority with which the popular imagination has invested him. Mr. Toynbee may therefore be forgiven for suppressing whatever inclination he might have had to anticipate tomorrow's or next week's headlines, and for his frequent resort to the conditional tenses. After all, what chiefly distinguishes his scheme of historical evolution from, say, those of Marx or Spengler, is the provision that it makes for contingency and choice -- in other words, for the operation of individual and collective wills.

However, the Professor does make clear his belief that the resources of the human will are about to be put to a severer test than any in the past, since humanity for perhaps the first time since the advent of pithecanthropus erectus, must now face the possibility of its utter annihilation. The nature, if not the magnitude, of this challenge is analogous to the challenges which were refused or evaded at corresponding crises in other civilizations; thus the prognosis is scarcely consoling. The great difference is, that hitherto when a "dominant minority" has failed of vision or of courage in its hour of decision, the price of failure has been the death of a particular civilization but not of civilization itself, which after a brief somnolence has arisen elsewhere with restored vigor. That, however, is an historical phenomenon upon which we can no longer rely. What sets apart the predicament of Western civilization is, of course, the great potential destruction inherent in its unexampled technologies. If, then, our Society undertakes to heal its social and spiritual schisms by a series of atomic wars, there may be no survivors at all among the vertebrate animals, thus the whole earth may fall into the undisputed possession of the higher insects. But if there are to be human survivors, Professor Toynbee advises us to place our bets on the African pygmies, although he seems to allow an outside chance to the French-Canadians and Chinese.

The great historical fact of the Twentieth Century, Professor Toynbee tells us, has been the impact of Western ideologies and techniques on Societies which have hitherto been outside the orbit of Western civilization. The revolutionary ferment thus engendered is now producing a counterimpact on the West. Out of this historical interaction must come, as in the past, the aspiration and struggle toward a universal Society. If this struggle takes the form of conflict between rival ideologies, supported by weapons, then civilization and perhaps humanity are doomed. If, however, it takes the form of a religious awakening, hope is possible. Out of it may come the palingenesis, or rebirth, whereby Christianity in some process of syncretistic development will, as I gather, unify mankind by infusing and absorbing the other higher religions. An analogy is to be found in the impact of classical civilization on the Judeo-Syriac world and the counterimpact in the evangelical mission of St. Paul. Thus we may see, says the Professor, "that the most important thing in the history of the Graeco-Roman world is its meeting with other civilizations, and that these encounters are important, not for their immediate political and economic consequences, but for their long-term religious consequences". Who knows, he adds, that the present contacts of Western civilization with the Orthodox, Islamic, Hindu, Far Eastern, and perhaps aboriginal American Societies may not have consequences equally momentous? Anyway, Western Marxism, now rebounding upon us under its Russian metamorphosis, is plainly an early phase of the "counterimpact".

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